

Misc 'Paper Jungle' Cited In Congressional Study

By Edward S. Cohen
Staff Reporter

For many people it's only a paper moon. For one Congressman, who for years has been studying the vagaries of paper and its multifarious ways, it's only a paper pushing world.

And he's tired of it. His name is Arthur Olsen, he's a Democrat from Montana, he's been fighting it for a long time, and finally this past week, just as the Federal paperwork jungle was closing in on him and his staff, he cried out to the public for help in his struggle against paperpushing.

Olsen, chairman of the House Civil Service Subcommittee on Census and Statistics, told the rest of us paper-users that when President Johnson asserted to Congress in his State of the Union message that we don't intend to be buried by anyone, he ought to have included "the Federal agencies and their paperwork."

One example of paperwork which particularly riles Olsen are "the 500 million forms a year which the Internal Revenue Service and Social Security Administration now process in operating the new taxpayer numbering system." This would not be so bad, Olsen announced, but computers are adding to the paper flow when they in theory should reduce paperwork.

Olsen envisions himself as a sort of salvation to the in-

dividual citizen, the small businessman, and business in general. He says he's much concerned about the effects of "empty building and paperpushing" on these groups.

Small companies, for instance, says Olsen, often do not have enough employees or bookkeepers to handle the reporting requirements of Federal or local government agencies. "This paperwork often means the difference between a profit and a loss to the small companies."

Olsen went on to support President Johnson's recent plea to his Cabinet officers that they should pay more attention to the management of their departments and agencies and "to cut out excessive paperwork because it breeds overstaffing."

The Montana Congressman, who's been around long enough to know what most of the paper is used for, said in his report that "a good place to start a review of what he calls 'the numbers game' is the IRS. "There must be a cheaper and easier way of keeping taxpayers honest than the paperwork jungle the Internal Revenue Service has created; you can spend more on a return than the revenue the Government ultimately will receive."

Olsen is not mad at everybody, though. He likes what the Interstate Commerce Commission was doing, when last year it reduced by one-half million reports its paperwork requirements of regulated carriers.

He also seemed pleased with some of the systems work of the Treasury Department and the Bureau of Old-Age and Survivors Insurance. The latter uses computer tape for the transmittal of records. Olsen said this makes a substantial reduction in paperwork.



Growing 'Paperwork Jungle' Hit By House Unit as Boosting Costs

By JOSEPH YOUNG
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A House committee has criticized sharply what it calls the "Federal Paperwork Jungle."

The mountain of Government paperwork is raising Federal costs considerably and inflating Government employment and salaries, it was charged by the House Civil Service Subcommittee on Census and Statistics.

Representative Olsen, Democrat of Montana, chairman of the group, sardonically commented that when President Johnson told Congress in his state-of-the-Union message that we don't intend to be buried by anyone he should have "included the Federal agencies and their paperwork."

Mr. Olsen said his subcommittee's investigation showed that excessive Federal paperwork was being used to push empire-building and overstaffing in Government.

Otherwise well-meaning Government officials "seem intent on nurturing" a greater amount of paperwork in their agencies, Mr. Olsen said.

He cited as an example the 500 million forms a year which the Internal Revenue Service and Social Security Administration now process in operating the new taxpayer numbering system.

The irony of it, according to Mr. Olsen, is that electronic computers in this case are helping to create more paperwork when ordinarily they should be used to reduce the paperwork flow.

The Montanan said the excessive Government paperwork is often too onerous for the small businessman who doesn't have enough employees or bookkeepers to handle the reporting requirements of Government agencies. This paperwork often means the difference between a

profit and a loss to these small companies, he said.

Mr. Olsen indorsed President Johnson's recent request to cabinet officers and agency heads to eliminate excessive paperwork because it breeds overstaffing.

A good place to start is the Internal Revenue Service, he added.

Mr. Olsen said the Government's record is not all bad in this regard. He cited the excellent record of the Interstate Commerce Commission which last year reduced its paperwork requirements of regulated carriers by a half-million reports. Mr. Olsen also commended some of the systems work of the Treasury Department and the Bureau of Old-Age Survivors Insurance, which provides for the transmittal of records via computer tape and thereby makes a substantial reduction in paperwork.

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